



# Gloucester Diocesan Advisory Committee

## AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR WORK

### FUNCTION

Like all DACs we have a statutory duty to advise the Diocesan Chancellor about any requests under the faculty system for works affecting churches or churchyards and their contents.

Our brief under the Care of Churches Measure 1991 is that all members "shall have due regard to the role of a church as a local centre of worship and mission".

There is often a tension between the claims of conservation and mission when it comes to adapting and developing historic churches, for example the provision of new facilities such as meeting rooms, kitchens and lavatories. The DAC's task is to ensure that any scheme is well conceived and worthy and will serve the foreseeable needs of church users. At the same time it must be worthy of the existing building and not unreasonably destructive of valuable or historic features.

The Chancellor is not bound by our advice, and in rare cases where agreement between the parish, the DAC, consultative bodies, the wider public and the Chancellor is not possible, a hearing in the Consistory Court may be necessary. The policy of the DAC is to find a mutually acceptable solution without recourse to the courts, wherever possible, and to encourage parishes to engage in early and open public consultation about their proposals in an attempt to avoid conflict and objection.

Gloucester DAC is also particularly anxious to develop its role in promoting the intelligent care of churches. Every opportunity is taken to encourage a sympathetic and creative approach to the needs of our church buildings.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the DAC is governed by its Constitution of 1992. There must be at least 12 members, appointed by Bishop's Council, including two elected members of Diocesan Synod. Three of the members shall be appointed in consultation with, respectively, Historic England, the national Amenity Societies (Victorian Society etc.) and the relevant association of Local Authorities. The spread of membership must include knowledge and experience of architecture, archaeology, art and history, liturgy and worship, and the care of historic buildings and their contents.

## **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

There are roughly 9 meetings a year, spaced every 5-6 weeks. Each summer a calendar is circulated showing meeting dates to the end of the following year. Meetings take place on Friday at 10.00 am at Church House, College Green, Gloucester. The meeting room is normally open from 9.30 am onwards, and drawings, photos, samples etc. relating to current casework will be on display. During the meeting, a PowerPoint presentation is used to illustrate the casework.

Previous minutes are circulated with the Agenda, which are usually sent out 10 days before the meeting, together with any other supporting paperwork. The papers are also sent to the national Amenity Societies and to the County Archaeologist. No apology is made for the considerable bulk of reading matter which is inevitable, given our workload.

In constructing the Agenda, the "Matters Arising" section is used to report issues relating to previous casework, such as subsequent objections, minor changes or the submission of views from consultative bodies. Anything involving substantive discussion or further decisions is raised under current casework. We also try to finish meetings with any relevant images of recently-completed casework, so members are given an opportunity to review work which they saw at an earlier stage.

## **SITE MEETINGS**

In between monthly meetings, there may be site visits, either:

a) at the request of the parish, where preliminary advice has been sought; or

b) at the request of the DAC, where we need to review the details of a scheme on site.

Usually, site visits are open to all members who are willing and able to attend and where possible the dates and times of proposed visits will be included within the agenda for the next meeting to enable members the opportunity to decide whether they would like to attend.

A number of important principles should be borne in mind when on site:

1. There is a danger of opinions or statements expressed by DAC members being taken as formal advice. In order to prevent this, both attending members and parish representatives should be reminded that any advice or decision can only be finalised after the subsequent DAC meeting, when the matter has been discussed by the full Committee. Site visits are always accompanied by a follow-up report which will only be endorsed at a full DAC meeting.
2. Members taking part in site visits should see themselves as acting as the "eyes and ears" of the full Committee. As a rule, members should avoid expressing personal opinions, and should restrict themselves to fact-finding questions and statements. There may be occasions, however (usually where preliminary advice has been specifically sought by the parish) when the expression of opinion is inevitable. Care should still be taken, however, to emphasise that such opinions are personal, and not necessarily shared by the full DAC.
3. It is very important that the purpose of the meeting is established at the outset and kept in mind throughout.
4. Advice of a purely technical nature may be given by the DAC's advisers on bells, clocks, heating, lighting and organs. They may also visit parishes without prior reference to the full Committee, but are expected to report to a subsequent meeting any matters on which they have given advice.

## **DAC ARCHIVE**

Considerable archive resources exist for the churches in this diocese. Survey files on each church building were sent to the Gloucestershire Archives in Summer 2013 in which copies of old Quinquennial Reports, photographs and ground plans are available, together with guidebooks and any other available information. part of the main public archive and can be accessed by contacting the archives directly. All faculty cases are also archived at the Gloucestershire Archives, and the Diocesan Registrar does an annual deposit of cases dealt with in the last calendar year. All these records are on public access and you can arrange to view the documents by contacting the archives directly at: Tel: 01452 425295

Website: [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives), Email: [archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk),

Address: Gloucestershire Archives, Clarence Row, Alvin Street, Gloucester GL1 3DW

Since 2005 all photography has been digital and most churches now have digital files of images on the diocesan network which we use for both record purposes and also reference in relation to casework. Members are most welcome to refer to our photo-archive by arrangement with the Church Buildings Team.

## **DELEGATION POLICY**

All matters are dealt with through the full Committee in the first instance. In some circumstances where minor points of detail remain to be resolved, the matter may be delegated to the relevant adviser as the case may be. In such cases, the eventual handling of the matter will be reported at a subsequent meeting under the "Matters Arising" section of the agenda.

In rare cases of genuine emergency, appropriate action may be authorised by the Chairman, DAC Secretary or Chancellor and the circumstances will be reported to a subsequent meeting.

## **LIAISON WITH CBC**

Close links are maintained with the Church Buildings Council, and each year several

members will usually attend the National DACs Conference, organised by the CBC, as well as specialist members (such as Organs and Bells) being invited to attend conferences on these specialist topics.

## **ARCHITECTS/SURVEYORS**

The DAC is responsible for approving applications for inclusion on the Diocese List of Approved Architects and Surveyors. A form is available for applicants to download from our website and applications are then considered by the Chairman, DAC Secretary and a selection of members before the applicant is invited to an interview.

The Church Buildings Team maintain close links with the architects and surveyors working with our parishes and we share a one-day conference with the Dioceses of Worcester and Hereford each year, to which all architects and surveyors on our 'approved lists' are invited to attend.

## **EXPENSES**

DAC members are entitled to submit claims for mileage or other expenses incurred on DAC business, including attendance at monthly meetings. Forms are available at meetings, or on request from the DAC Secretary.

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